

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CCO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OC-05 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02

PER-01 FSI-01 FBO-02 SCCT-01 AID-05 DHA-02 OMB-01

SCS-03 SCA-01 INRE-00 /103 W  
----- 049230

O R 291410Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6901

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

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CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13430

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: NO CHANGE IN BEIRUT FIGHTING; POLITICAL IMPASSE DEEPENS.

SUMMARY: FIGHTING STILL WIDESPREAD IN BEIRUT AT FAIRLY INTENSE LEVEL. LULLS ARE TEMPORARY ONLY. HOTEL CLASHES REMAIN A CENTER OF ACTION, WITH EFFECTS NOW CLOSER TO U.S. EMBASSY. FOREIGN COMMUNITY LEAVING AT INCREASING RATE. KARAME'S "SECURITY" COMMITTEE" NOT YET OFF THE GROUND. CALLS FOR PRESIDENT FRANGIE TO RESIGN ARE CROPPING UP AGAIN, AND WE ANTICIPATE MORE OF THIS IS DAYS AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

1. THERE WAS NO APPRECIABLE LETUP IN THE FIGHTING NIGHT OCT 28/29 AND UP TO NOON TODAY, OCT 29, ALTHOUGH TEMPORARY LULLS OCCURRED FROM TIME TO TIME. THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL AND NEIGHBORING AIN MREISSE AREAS ARE STILL HEAVILY ENGAGED, WITH OCCASIONAL FIRE SPILLING OVER THIS MORNING TO FRONT OF U.S. EMBASSY. BATTLING FACTIONS HOLD THEIR POSITIONS IN HOTEL CLASH, WITH KATEAB INSIDE THE PHOENICIA, HOLIDAY INN AND ST. GEORGES AND FORCES OF QULAYLAT AND PALESTINIANS PRESSING THEM. DURING LULLS IN THE BATTLE YESTERDAY AND THIS MORNING, ARMY HALFTRACKS WERE ABLE TO REMOVE FOREIGN QUESTS FROM PHOENICIA AND HOLIDAY INN.

2. FOREIGN COMMUNITY IS LEAVING IN INCREASINGLY RAPID NUMBERS, AS BATTLES GET CLOSER TO WEST BEIRUT RESIDENTIAL AREAS WHERE MOST FOREIGNERS LIVE. (AMERICAN DEPARTURES SUBJECT OF SEPARATE REPORTING.) ECONOMY REMAINS AT STANDSTILL, ALTHOUGH AIRPORT FUNCTIONING REGULARLY. FEW STREETS IN BEIRUT ARE CONSIDERED FULLY SAFE EXCEPT FOR SOME WEST BEIRUT THOROUGHFARES AND ROAD TO AIRPORT.

3. KARAME'S "SECURITY COMMITTEE" IS GETTING OFF TO PAINFULLY SLOW START AS SEVERAL KEY FIGURES, INCLUDING CHAMOUN, JUMBLATT, AND GEMAYEL HAVE YET TO SHOW UP. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPCT KARAME MAY HAVE SOUGHT FROM COMMITTEE  
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HAS NOT MATERIALIZED. GEMAYEL HAS SENT WORD THAT HE WILL COME BUT CHAMOUNT AKES POSITION THAT MEETING SHOULD BE AT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE NEAR PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, RATHER THAN KARAME'S OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN SERAIL, WHICH IN INSUECURE AREA. JUMBLATT HAS INDICATED HE WILL JOINT COMMITTEE BUT HAS ALSO EXPRESSED DOUBT ABOUT ITS USEFULNESSHE CONTINUES TO CALL FOR SWEEPING POLITICAL REFORMS. MEANWHILE, ALL ELEMENTS OF "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" COMMITTEE ARE TREADING

WATER UNTIL SITUATION CLARIFIES. PARLIAMENT IS SUPPOSED TO MEET TOMORROW BUT MAY AGAIN BE UNABLE TO DO SO.

4. AN INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN PARLIAMENT SQUARE WHILE DEPUTIES WERE GATHERING IN PARLIAMENT BUILDING YESTERDAY AWAITING A QUORUM. A GROUP OF ARMED MEN OF UNDETERMINED IDENTITY ENTERED THE SQUARE AND STARTED TO CREATE A SCENE WITH A LOUDSPEAKER. SHOOT-OUT RESULTED WITH INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES. ONE OF GROUP WAS KILLED AS WELL AS BODYGUARD OF PIERRE GEMAYEL, WHO WAS THEN ENTERING CHAMBER. RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING THAT GROUP WANTED TO ASSASSINATE SEVERAL DEPUTIES. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS STORY, BUT ATTEMPT ON LIFE OF GEMAYEL, AT LEAST, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN PART OF THEIR MOTIVE.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT KARAME WILL TODAY ASK ALL RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS INCLUDING ARAFAT TO MEET WITH HIS "SECURITY COMMITTEE" IN A SUMMIT CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS A CEASEFIRE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

6. CALLS FOR PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S RESIGNATION ARE CROPPING UP AGAIN, AND WE EXPECT MORE IN DAYS AHEAD AS CRISIS CONTINUES. PRESIDENT IS EXPECTED TO RESIST AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, AND MANY CHRISTIAN LEADERS ARE AMBIVALENT TO SAY THE LEAST. HOWEVER, MUCH CHRISTIAN OPINION REACHING POINT WHERE FRANGIE DEPARTURE REGARDED AS ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE FOR END OF ROUND 4. ONE PROJECTED SCENARIO MENTIONED BY FRANGIE'S POLITICAL ENEMIES IS FOR KARAME TO RESIGN FIRST, AFTER WHICH IT WOULD BECOME APPARENT THAT SUNNI LEADERS WILL NOT COOPERATE WITH PRESIDENT IN FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT. (THIS SCENARIO ASSUMES FRANGIE

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WILL BE UNABLE TO FIND TAME SUNNI POLITICIANS TO ASSUME PREMIERSHIP. AN ASSUMPTION BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. HOWEVER, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANY SUNNI TAKING JOB WOULD BE ABLE TO GOVERN, AND SO SCENARIO COMES TO SAME POINT EVENTUALLY.) RESULTING POLITICAL CRISIS ON TOP OF SECURITY DETERIORATION, THE THEORY GOES, WOULD EVENTUALLY COMPEL THE PRESIDENT TO STEP DOWN, AND PARLIAMENT WOULD PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR.

7. A GROUP OF POLITICIANS INCLUDING SAEB SALAM, RAYMOND EDDE, AND SOME ANTI KAMAL AL-ASSAD SHIITES MET YESTERDAY AND REPORTEDLY WILL SOON ISSUE AN APPEAL FOR THE PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION. SUCH ACTION IS NOT SURPRISING FROM THIS SET OF LONG-TIME FRANGIE ENEMIES, SEVERAL OF WHOM HAVE CALLED FOR FRANGIE TO STEP DOWN ON PAST OCCASIONS,

BUT THE COUNTRY'S INCREASINGLY DESPERATE SEARCH FOR A  
SOLUTION (OR EVEN A BRIEF RESPITE) MAY WELL GIVE THEIR  
CALL CONSIDERRABLE MOMENTUM THIS TIME.  
GODLEY

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**To:** STATE  
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